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INFORMATION REPORT

COUNTRY Korea

SUBJECT Public Opinion on Second Communist Occupation
of Seoul

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It was difficult for many Koreans to understand why the United Nations forces abandoned Seoul in January 1951. The people of Seoul began to lose faith in United Nations power, especially when UN planes bombed the city causing a great deal of damage, for three days after the Communists left. When the Chinese Communists did finally enter the city on 3 January they were very poorly equipped, and many of them did not even have arms. The primary reason that the Communists were not greeted by the people of Seoul as they had been in the first occupation was that only the weak and aged remained.

Koreans felt that the UN gave up Seoul unnecessarily, since if the Communists had been forced to spend the worst part of the winter in the mountains, instead of the city where they could obtain labor, food and shelter, they would have been greatly weakened. The fact that the Communists left Seoul in the spring is not a great victory for the UN, since Seoul is no longer strategic and shelter is no longer needed. The first and greatest need of the Chinese Communists was food. All the Chinese nationals left in the city were required to cook for the troops. Most of these Chinese in Seoul, being small businessmen, were not sympathetic to the Communist cause, and many favored the Nationalists, since they were far more enterprising.

While the Chinese were in Seoul, they told the people of the United Nations Command and the people found it very difficult to believe. When the people found out that much of it was true, they lost even more confidence in the UN. They feel if the Communists had half the supplies the UN has they would have won long ago.

During this occupation, most of the Chinese Communist troops were quartered on the outskirts of Seoul and usually they were very well behaved. They rarely appeared on the city streets but came in at night for purpose of confiscating abandoned property. The Chinese were particularly good in propaganda work from the first day they arrived, putting up posters, publishing a newspaper and organizing committees and other groups. The North Korean troops were undisciplined and caused a great deal of damage.

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5. After the UN reentry of Seoul, the situation was uneasy, for the people expected the troops to withdraw at any time. Elements of the American troops were undisciplined and resorted to robbery and rape. ROK police and MF's were continually shooting their guns in the street and incurring the enmity of the people. However, later on the police made an effort to win the trust of the people by strict controls on their own members. The conduct of UN and Chinese troops was compared by the Seoul citizens and often evaluated in favor of the Chinese. One element on the UN side, however, was that where the Communists took away food, the UN brought it in and distributed it.
6. Although many Koreans believe that the UN will abandon Seoul again, most of the refugees will go south, if only to escape the UN bombings of evacuated areas. The very poor will remain in Seoul, since nothing worse can happen to them. The feeling is that the UN is too naive and soft against the Communists, while thinking nothing of bombing and destroying innocent civilians. UN advances seem slow and deliberate, while the retreats are rapid and careless. The United Nations soldiers do not appear to the Koreans to have the interests of Korea at heart. Yet the people of Seoul hope for a United Nations victory, for they believe that in the long run United Nations material superiority will conquer the Chinese Communist spirit.

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